

SUBCHAPTER II. DRAINAGE BY CORPORATION.

Article 3.

Manner of Organization.

§ 156-37. Petition filed in superior court.

Any proprietor in fee of swamplands, which cannot be drained except by cutting a canal through the lands of another or other proprietor in fee, situated at a lower level and which would also be materially benefited by the cutting of such canal, who desires that such canal be cut on the terms on which it is hereinafter allowed, may apply by petition, setting forth the facts, to the superior court of the county in which any of the lands through which the canal will pass may lie. (1868-9, c. 164, s. 2; Code, s. 1311; Rev., s. 3996; C.S., s. 5295.)

§ 156-38. Commissioners appointed; report required.

On the establishment by the petitioner of his allegations, the court shall appoint three persons as commissioners who, having been duly sworn, shall examine the premises and inquire and report:

- (1) Whether the lands of the petitioner can be conveniently drained otherwise than through those of some other person.
- (2) Through the lands of what other persons a canal to drain the lands of the petitioner would properly pass, considering the interests of all concerned.
- (3) A description of the several pieces of lands through which the canal would pass, and the present values of such portions of the pieces of lands as would be benefited by it, and the reasons for arriving at the conclusion as to the benefit.
- (4) The route and plan of the canal, including its breadth, depth, and slope, as nearly as they can be calculated, with all other particulars necessary for calculating its cost.
- (5) The probable cost of the canal and of a road on its bank, and of such other work, if any, as may be necessary for its profitable use.
- (6) The proportion of the benefit (after a deduction of all damages) which each proprietor would receive by the proposed canal and a road on its bank if deemed necessary and in which each ought, in equity and justice, to pay toward their construction and permanent support.
- (7) With their report they shall return a map explaining, as accurately as may be, the various matters required to be stated in their report. (1868-9, c. 164, s. 3; Code, s. 1312; Rev., s. 3997; C.S., s. 5296.)

§ 156-39. Surveyor employed.

The commissioner may employ a surveyor to prepare the map required to accompany their report. (1868-9, c. 164, s. 4; Code, s. 1313; Rev., s. 3998; C.S., s. 5297.)

§ 156-40. Confirmation of report.

If it appear that the lands on the lower level will be increased in value twenty-five percent (25%) or upwards by the proposed improvement, within one year after the completion thereof, and that the cost of making such improvement will not exceed three fourths of the present estimated value of the land to be benefited, and that the proprietors of at least one half in value of the land to

be affected consent to the improvement, the court may confirm such report, either in full or with such modifications therein as shall be just and equitable. (1868-9, c. 164, s. 5; Code, s. 1314; Rev., s. 3999; C.S., s. 5298.)

§ 156-41. Proprietors become a corporation.

Upon a final adjudication, confirming the report, the proprietors of the several pieces of land adjudged to be benefited by the improvement shall be declared a corporation, of which the capital stock shall be double the estimated cost of the improvements, and in which the several owners of the land adjudged to be benefited shall be corporators, holding shares of stock in the proportions in which they are adjudged liable for the expense of making and keeping up the improvement. (1868-9, c. 164, s. 6; Code, s. 1315; Rev., s. 4000; C.S., s. 5299.)

§ 156-42. Organization; corporate name, officers and powers.

The clerk of the court of the county in which the proceeding is pending or any corporator, who is a petitioner, may call a meeting of the corporators, at which meeting the corporators shall choose a name for the corporation, unless the commissioners selected the name, elect a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, but said officers shall be chosen or elected from the corporators who are petitioners in the proceeding; and they shall also choose or elect a board of directors and they shall be chosen or elected from the corporators who are petitioners in the proceeding. The corporators shall also make all bylaws and regulations, not contrary to law, which may be necessary and proper for effecting the purpose of the corporation, but said duty may be delegated to the board of directors. They shall fix the number of shares of stock, and assign to each proprietor or corporator his proper number, but this duty and right may be delegated to and done by the board of directors. The board of directors shall have such powers as are generally given to directors under the corporation law of the State; and they shall assess the sums or amount which shall be paid by each proprietor or corporator in conformity with and in compliance with the report of the commissioners on which the corporation is based. When said assessments against said proprietors or corporators and their lands affected are duly certified to the clerk of the superior court of the county in which such proceeding was instituted, the same shall be passed upon by the clerk of court and when approved by the clerk, said assessments shall become judgments against the several proprietors, corporators and owners so assessed, and the same shall be liens on the lands of the owners or corporators against whom said assessments were made and judgments entered, subject only to taxes, but said judgments shall be judgments in rem only. The board of directors will also have power, if they deem it proper, to fix and prescribe the time, mode and manner of payment; and do such other things as are necessary for the construction, enlargement and keeping up or maintaining said canal and improvement. In every meeting of the corporators or stockholders, each proprietor or corporator shall have one vote for each share of stock owned by him. (1868-9, c. 164, s. 7; Code, s. 1316; Rev., s. 4001; C.S., s. 5300; 1939, c. 180, s. 1.)

§ 156-43. Incorporation of canal already constructed; commissioners; reports.

Whenever the proprietors of any canal already cut shall desire to become incorporated, any number of the proprietors, not less than one third in number, may file their petition before the clerk of the superior court of the county in which the canal is located, or in either county, where the canal may be located in more than one county, setting forth the names of the proprietors, the length and size of the canal, the names of the owners of land draining in such canal, and the quantity of

land tributary thereto. And upon filing the petition, summons shall issue to all parties having an easement in the canal, returnable as in other special proceedings; upon the return thereof, or upon a day fixed by the clerk for hearing same, all owners of the canal may become corporators therein, and upon failure of any to avail themselves of that right, they shall not be entitled to become corporators, except under such bylaws and regulations as such corporation shall make and declare. But those who fail to avail themselves of the benefit of this Subchapter shall not be deprived of their easement in the canal, but shall enjoy the same upon payment to the corporation of the assessment made upon them pro rata with the corporators; such assessment shall be made on the land tributary to the canal and apportioned pro rata to each owner thereof; it shall be made by the corporation on 10 days' notice to each owner of the land, under such rules and regulations as the bylaws may prescribe; but any person dissatisfied therewith shall have the right to appeal to a jury at the regular term of the superior court of the county, and the amount of damages assessed shall be a first lien on the land of the owner against whom judgment shall be rendered.

Upon the return date of the summons or on the hearing by the clerk as provided in this section, the clerk of the court may appoint three persons as commissioners, who having been duly sworn shall examine the premises and inquire and report:

- (1) The route and plan of the canal, including the breadth, depth and slope as nearly as they can be calculated, with all other particulars necessary for calculating the cost of enlarging and improving said canal.
- (2) The probable cost of the improvement and enlargement of said canal.
- (3) The proportion which each proprietor or corporator ought in equity and justice to pay toward the enlargement, improvement and permanent support and upkeep of said canal.
- (4) With their report they shall return a map explaining as accurately as may be, the various matters required and necessary in aid or explanation of their report.
- (5) The said report shall be heard and determined as other reports in special proceedings, and if approved by the clerk, such proprietors shall become a body corporate or a corporation.
- (6) A meeting of the corporators may be called by the clerk of court or by any corporator or proprietor who is a petitioner in the proceeding, and at such meeting a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer shall be elected from the proprietors or corporators who are petitioners; and also a board of directors shall be elected from the proprietors or corporators who are petitioners in the proceeding.
- (7) The board of directors shall assess the sum or amount which shall be paid by each proprietor or corporator in conformity and compliance with the report of the commissioners on which the corporation was based. When said assessments against said proprietors or corporators and their lands affected are duly certified to the clerk of the superior court of the county in which said proceeding was pending and instituted, the same shall be passed upon by the clerk of court, and when approved by the clerk, said assessments shall become judgments against the several proprietors or corporators so assessed, and the same shall be liens on the lands of the owners or corporators against whom said assessments were made and judgments entered, subject only to taxes, but said judgments shall be judgments in rem only. The board of directors will also, if they deem it proper,

fix and prescribe the time, manner and mode of payment. (1889, c. 380; 1901, c. 670; Rev., s. 4008; C.S., s. 5301; 1939, c. 180, s. 2.)